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General Assembly

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**Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples**

# Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2017 to March 2018

## Report of the Secretary-General

*Summary*

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 72/110 of 7 December 2017, provides a general overview of the activities undertaken and supported by the Department of Public Information to disseminate information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unless otherwise mentioned, it covers the period from April 2017 to March 2018.

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# I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 72/110, considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. To that end, it requested the Department of Public Information, through the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions, to actively engage and seek new and innovative ways to disseminate material to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further enhance the information provided on the United Nations decolonization website and to continue to include the full series of reports of the regional seminars on decolonization, the statements and the scholarly papers presented at those seminars and links to the full series of reports on the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In paragraph 4, the Assembly requested the Department of Public Information to continue its efforts to update web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 5, it requested the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Public Information to implement the recommendations of the Special Committee on Decolonization and to continue their efforts to take measures through all of the media available, including publications, radio, television, the Internet and social media, to give publicity to the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

2. In fulfilling its mandate, the Department of Public Information worked closely with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs, among other relevant United Nations offices and entities.

3. The present report, prepared in response to that mandate, covers the period from April 2017 to March 2018.

# II. 2017 Caribbean regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism

4. The Special Committee on Decolonization organized its annual regional seminar in Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, from 16 to 18 May 2017. The seminar was held on the occasion of the Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories.

5. The Department of Public Information deployed a press officer from its Meetings Coverage Section in New York to cover the seminar. The press officer worked closely with the Decolonization Unit, issuing daily press releases, which were disseminated through the Department's various communications platforms.

# III. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly

6. During the reporting period, the Department issued a total of 30 press releases in English and French, covering meetings, statements and hearings related to the work

of the United Nations on decolonization, including by the General Assembly and its Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee), and the Special Committee on Decolonization.

7. The Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit disseminated information about meetings on decolonization through media alerts and provided accreditation and liaison support to media representatives covering the meetings. The Media Documents Centre also distributed statements and other information related to those meetings.

## United Nations website and social media

8. The Department maintained and updated the website on the United Nations and Decolonization (www.un.org/en/decolonization) in the six official languages, adding pages for the new sessions of the Special Committee and the annual regional seminar. During the period from January through December 2017, more than 195,000 users visited the website, an increase of 36.5 per cent from the previous year. Furthermore, the website registered over 366,000 sessions, an increase of 106 per cent from the previous year. The table below shows the United Nations decolonization website traffic in 2017, by language:

| *Language* | *Sessions* | *Users* | *Page views* | *Pages per session* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 8 847 | 5 718 | 12 078 | 2.2 |
| Chinese | 7 376 | 3 894 | 10 090 | 3.19 |
| English | 206 168 | 99 165 | 272 300 | 2.78 |
| French | 26 789 | 15 992 | 35 360 | 2.38 |
| Russian | 8 786 | 5 749 | 11 332 | 2.09 |
| Spanish | 108 684 | 64 673 | 140 119 | 2.04 |
| **Total** | **366 650** | **195 191** | **481 279** | **2.45**[a] |

[a] Average.

9. Activities and issues related to decolonization were also highlighted through the "Global Issues" web page of the www.un.org website (http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/decolonization/).

10. The Department's multilingual social media accounts promoted issues related to decolonization, including news updates and the history of the Trusteeship Council. They also helped in driving traffic to the decolonization web page on the Organization's main website and to other related web pages and events.

## United Nations News

11. The Department's multimedia United Nations News operation, in the six official languages, plus Kiswahili and Portuguese, provided news and feature coverage of activities, events and issues related to decolonization and to the Non-Self-Governing Territories, which was disseminated to global audiences through the Internet, social media platforms, media partners and online news aggregators.

12. United Nations News coverage spanned a wide range of developments related to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. These included, for example, the appointment of Horst Köhler as the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, the situation in Guerguerat and humanitarian aid to Sahrawi refugees. United Nations News also reported on each phase of recovery following the powerful category 5 hurricanes Irma and Maria, which hit the Caribbean region in September, including an interview with the Director of the Department of Disaster Management and Emergencies for the Turks and Caicos Islands, Virginia Clerveaux. Other United Nations News coverage included the 2017 Caribbean Regional Seminar on Decolonization, the opening of the 2018 session of the Special Committee on Decolonization in February 2018, and issues related to the Falkland Islands (Malvinas). The Department of Public Information press release issued on 22 February to mark the opening of the 2018 session of the Special Committee highlighted the statement of the Secretary-General, in which he noted that decolonization had been a central aspect of his previous political life, and in which he expressed solidarity with those Non-Self-Governing Territories which had been affected by hurricanes in the past year. The Secretary-General followed up his statement with a personal tweet on the occasion of the 2018 session of the Special Committee.

13. The United Nations Television News and Facilities Unit covered three formal open meetings of the General Assembly and the Special Committee. The United Nations webcast website provided live and on-demand webcast coverage of United Nations meetings and events related to decolonization issues. During the period from April 2017 to February 2018, a total of 28 videos on decolonization were made available on the United Nations Web TV website. The United Nations Photo Unit also covered the meetings of the Special Committee held in June 2017 and February 2018 and disseminated its photos through its website.

## IV. Visitors Services

14. The issue of decolonization was regularly included in the narrative of the guided tours of United Nations Headquarters in New York. In the Trusteeship Council Chamber, tour guides explained the historical process of decolonization, including the role played by the Trusteeship Council and the work of the Special Committee on Decolonization in the light of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. During the reporting period, more than 245,000 visitors took a guided tour at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

15. The Visitors Services in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna also shared informational materials and conducted briefings on decolonization, including on the roles of the Trusteeship Council, the Special Committee and the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories, as part of the United Nations guided tours programme. The programme reached a total of 162,200 visitors in Geneva, Nairobi and Vienna.

## V. Dag Hammarskjöld Library

16. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library published two new research guides relating to decolonization during the reporting period: one on the Trusteeship Council (http://research.un.org/en/docs/tc) and the other on decolonization

(http://research.un.org/en/docs/decolonization). These two guides form part of the United Nations documentation research guide series, which is available online to anyone wishing to learn more about these topics. The publication of the Trusteeship Council guide means that a research guide is now available for each of the major United Nations organs. The publication of these new guides was also promoted through the official twitter account of the Library, @UNLibrary.

17. The Library continued to provide research and information services on an ongoing basis. In particular, the Library assisted the Office of Legal Affairs in researching and digitizing numerous documents for the dossier of documents submitted by the Secretariat to the International Court of Justice in relation to the request by the General Assembly for an advisory opinion on the legal consequences of the separation of the Chagos Archipelago from Mauritius in 1965, as contained in resolution 71/292 of 22 June 2017. As a result, 279 historic United Nations documents relating to the issue are now publicly available to researchers around the world through the Official Document System.

18. Through its retrospective digitization programme, the Library continued to digitize important United Nations documents and make them available through the Official Document System and the United Nations Digital Library. During the reporting period, 21,200 documents (257,600 pages) were digitized, including 2,500 official records of the Trusteeship Council.

19. In the past year, the Library analysed some 9,000 United Nations documents and publications, including retrospective work done to enable the curation of documents of the Trusteeship Council, as well as documents connected to other United Nations bodies on the topic of decolonization. Three volumes of the Index to Proceedings of the Security Council (seventy-first year), United Nations Economic and Social Council (2016 session) and the General Assembly (seventieth session) were completed and posted on United Nations websites. In addition, the Library continues to update the index to the database that facilitates the discovery of speeches before the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Economic and Social Council on the topic of decolonization. These bibliographic and analytical works allow for access by thematic and geographical subject and easy discovery of the documents via the Library's online services.

## VI. United Nations publications

20. During the reporting period, the Department published volume 67 (2013) of the Yearbook of the United Nations and continued to work on subsequent volumes. With its comprehensive coverage of the annual activities of the United Nations, including those related to decolonization, the Yearbook presented the work of the General Assembly, the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee, as well as general decolonization issues and the support provided by the Economic and Social Council to Non-Self-Governing Territories. The United Nations Yearbook Twitter account also featured historical items related to decolonization.

## VII. United Nations Intranet, iSeek

21. The United Nations Intranet, iSeek, published a story on the two above-mentioned Dag Hammarskjöld Library research guides: in English, https://iseek.un.org/

article/explore-new-trusteeship-council-decolonization-research-guides; and in French, https://iseek.un.org/fr/article/conseil-de-tutelle-deux-guides-pour-explorer-ses-activites.

## VIII. United Nations information centres and services

22. The global network of 59 active United Nations information centres organized activities to raise awareness of the work of the Organization on issues related to decolonization, including the ongoing Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, the United Nations trusteeship system and the role played by the Trusteeship Council. For example, 400 young people from schools across India, along with students from Afghanistan, Brazil, China, Egypt, Nepal, the Russian Federation, South Sudan and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, simulated and learned about the work of the Special Committee at a January 2018 Model United Nations event at Amity University in Uttar Pradesh (India). The event was jointly organized by the United Nations Information Centre in New Delhi and Amity University.

## IX. Conclusions

23. The Department of Public Information, as the public voice of the Organization, continues to work together with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political Affairs in disseminating information about decolonization and promoting the objectives of the ongoing Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Using diverse communications and outreach tools, the Department works to promote the need for the immediate and full implementation of the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, and highlights the work of the Special Committee as the intergovernmental body exclusively devoted to advancing the United Nations decolonization agenda.

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# Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: social, economic and environmental challenges, to be held in Grenada from [dates to be inserted]

## Guidelines and rules of procedure

## I. Introduction

1. At its sixty-fifth session, the General Assembly, by its resolution 65/119, declared the period 2011–2020 the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, and called upon Member States to intensify their efforts to continue to implement the plan of action for the Second International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (A/56/61, annex) and to cooperate with the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in updating it as necessary, with a view to using it as the basis for a plan of action for the Third International Decade.

2. At its seventy-second session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 72/111, approved the report of the Special Committee (A/72/23), including the programme of work envisaged for 2018, and requested the Special Committee to continue to seek suitable means for the immediate and full implementation of the Declaration and, among other things, to conduct seminars, as appropriate, for the purpose of receiving and disseminating information on the work of the Special Committee, and to facilitate participation by the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in those seminars.

## II. Place and dates of the seminar

3. The Pacific regional seminar will be held in Grenada from [dates to be inserted].

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## III. Purpose of the seminar

4. The purpose of the seminar is to enable the Special Committee to obtain the views of representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, experts, members of civil society, Member States and other stakeholders that can assist the Special Committee in identifying policy approaches and practical means that can be pursued in the United Nations decolonization process. The discussions at the seminar will assist the Special Committee in making a realistic analysis and evaluation of the situation in the Non-Self-Governing Territories, on a case-by-case basis, as well as the ways in which the United Nations system and the international community at large could enhance programmes of assistance to the Territories.

5. The contributions of the participants will serve as a basis for further consideration by the Special Committee at its substantive session, to be held in New York in June 2018, with a view to submitting proposals to the General Assembly concerning the fulfilment of the objectives of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

## IV. Theme and agenda of the seminar

6. The theme of the seminar is "Implementation of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism: towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories: social, economic and environmental challenges". The agenda of the seminar is as follows:

1. Role of the Special Committee in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions with regard to leaving no one behind: strategies and challenges.

2. Perspectives of the administering Powers, territorial Governments, concerned Member States and other stakeholders on the decolonization process:

   (a) Political developments and the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories:

      (i) In the Pacific region;

      (ii) In the Caribbean region;

      (iii) In other regions;

   (b) Financing for development: measures to address social, economic and environmental challenges, and the impact of natural disasters within the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

3. Role of the United Nations system in helping the Non-Self-Governing Territories to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

4. Short- and medium-term objectives for advancing decolonization: strategies and actions for the Special Committee.

5. Recommendations.

## V. Organization of the seminar

7. The following provisions will govern the organization of the seminar:

(a) The seminar will be organized by the Special Committee, in accordance with the rules of procedure contained in the annex to the present guidelines;

(b) The seminar will be conducted by a delegation of the Special Committee consisting of the Chair, the Chair's adviser, members of the Bureau and four other members representing each of the regional groups within the Special Committee;

(c) The seminar may be attended by the following:

(i) Representatives of Member States;

(ii) Representatives of the host Government;

(iii) Representatives of the administering Powers;

(iv) Representatives of the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(v) A representative of the Secretary-General;

(vi) Representatives of concerned specialized agencies and other organizations within the United Nations system;

(vii) Representatives of the organizations based in the region and in the Non-Self-Governing Territories;

(viii) Experts on Non-Self-Governing Territories.

# Annex

## Rules of procedure

### Preamble

The regional seminar is held under the terms of General Assembly resolution 72/111. The organization of the seminar and the conduct of its proceedings shall follow the general guidelines set out in the rules of procedure of the General Assembly [1] and the established practices of the Special Committee at previous seminars.

### Rule 1
### Responsibility for conducting the seminar

The seminar shall be organized by the Special Committee and conducted on its behalf by the Chair of the Special Committee, with the assistance of the Bureau of the seminar (see rule 2 (a) below) and the Committee secretariat (see rule 3 below).

### Rule 2
### Officers of the seminar

(a) The Chair shall appoint two Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur of the seminar from among the participating members of the Special Committee. These officers shall be given specific responsibilities by the Chair and shall constitute the Bureau of the seminar.

(b) The Chair shall declare the opening and closing of each meeting of the seminar, direct its discussions, ensure observance of the present rules, accord the right to speak, pose questions and announce decisions.

(c) If the Chair is unable to be present at a meeting or any part thereof, a Vice-Chair shall preside over the meeting.

### Rule 3
### Secretariat

(a) The secretariat of the Special Committee shall service the seminar.

(b) The secretariat shall be responsible for all necessary arrangements regarding the organization of the seminar.

### Rule 4
### Languages

The working languages of the seminar shall be English, French and Spanish.

[1] A/520/Rev.18 and A/520/Rev.18/Amend.1.

## Rule 5
## Conduct of business

(a) Decisions shall be taken by consensus to the extent possible. Should a vote be required, only representatives of the Special Committee attending the seminar shall be entitled to vote.

(b) Any procedural question with regard to the conduct of business of the seminar not covered by the present rules shall be decided upon by the Chair in consultation with the Bureau of the seminar.

## Rule 6
## Participation in the seminar

Participation in the seminar shall be restricted to the persons to whom formal invitations have been addressed by the Chair of the Special Committee, in accordance with the related decision of the General Assembly,[2] and whose names appear on the official list of participants drawn up by the Chair.

## Rule 7
## Debates and publicity concerning the seminar

(a) The meetings of the seminar shall be held in public, unless the Chair decides that exceptional circumstances require that a meeting be held in private.

(b) Statements to the information media shall be made by the Chair. The Department of Public Information of the Secretariat shall be responsible for the dissemination of information on the seminar, including the issuance of press releases covering meetings of the seminar held in public.

(c) Participating organizations shall be represented by the person so invited (see rule 6 above), who may make one general statement on issues within the purview of the mandate of the Committee and pertaining to those Territories under its consideration during the course of the seminar.

(d) The Chair may limit the time to be allowed to each speaker.

(e) During the course of the discussion, the Chair, with the consent of the seminar, may declare the list of speakers closed. When there are no speakers, the Chair shall, with the consent of the seminar, declare the debate closed.

## Rule 8
## Records

The seminar shall have sound recordings of its proceedings, which shall be retained in the archives of the United Nations, in accordance with established practice.

[2] See A/56/61, annex, para. 22 (c).

## Rule 9
## Report

The Rapporteur of the seminar shall prepare and present the draft procedural report on the proceedings of the seminar and other proposals before the seminar, for adoption at the concluding meeting of the seminar and with interpretation in the languages of the seminar (see rule 4 above). Members of the Special Committee who participate in the seminar will prepare and agree on the conclusions and recommendations of the seminar, for consideration and adoption at the Committee's substantive session.